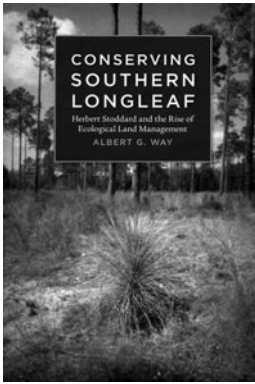


## BOOKS AND FILMS OF INTEREST

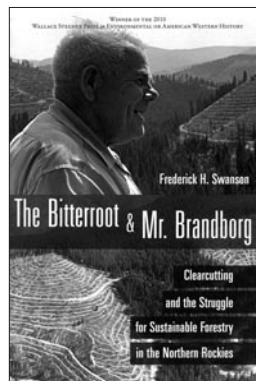
by Eben Lehman and James G. Lewis



The working southern forest and its importance to the evolution of American environmental thought is the subject of *Conserving Southern Longleaf: Herbert Stoddard and the Rise of Ecological Land Management* (2011), a new book in the University of Georgia Press series Environmental History and the American South. The author, Albert G. Way, contributed to last year's *The Art of Managing Longleaf: A Personal History of the Stoddard-Neel Approach*, the excellent memoir by Herbert Stoddard's protégé, Leon Neel. Way returns to the longleaf pine region of northern Florida and southern Georgia for a deeper look. From the northern tourists and hunters of the late 19th century, through Stoddard's pioneering 20th-century research on bobwhite quail and the longleaf pine ecosystem, Way shows why the southern coastal plain played such a crucial role in the evolution of American environmental thought. Stoddard, who first came to the region in 1924 as an agent of the U.S. Biological Survey and made it his home, is also this book's central figure. In the ensuing decades, Stoddard became thoroughly familiar with the area's ecological systems. Through his research, he began to reexamine conventional wisdom about the relationships between predators and prey, as well as the role of fire in the longleaf pine ecosystem. His new approach to land management, wildlife management, forestry, and fire ecology turned much of the existing scientific knowledge on its head. Stoddard's work led to the development of

a new, ecologically based approach to the land and influenced a generation of American conservation science. Way clearly demonstrates the importance of both Stoddard and the contributions of the working southern forest to the advancement of the American conservation movement.

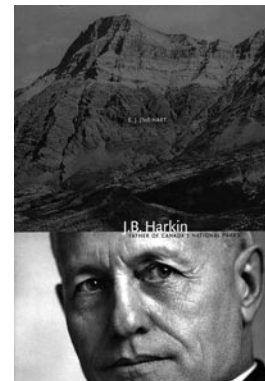
Just a few years into his career with the U.S. Forest Service, Guy M. Brandborg was given a rare opportunity: to lead former Chief Gifford Pinchot on a tour of the Lick Creek area of the Bitterroot National Forest, showcasing the forest's timber management methods. Pinchot came away impressed with the young forester's approach to selection cutting and told Brandborg that if he wanted to be a good forester, he had "better defend sound practices" like the one he was using at Lick Creek. Brandborg took Pinchot's advice to heart and spent the decades following their 1937 meeting vigorously defending his own forestry approaches. In *The Bitterroot and Mr. Brandborg: Clearcutting and the Struggle for Sustainable Forestry in the Northern Rockies* (University of Utah Press, 2011), Frederick H. Swanson traces the life and career of Brandborg, focusing on his role in the Bitterroot clearcutting contro-



versy of the 1960s and 1970s. (Readers may remember Swanson's article about this topic, "A Radical in the Ranks: G. M. Brandborg and the Bitterroot National Forest," in *Forest History Today's* 2009 issue.) As supervisor of the Bitterroot from 1935

to 1955, Brandborg oftentimes found himself in contention with national Forest Service policy. Faced with increasing demands for timber harvests following World War II, he began to fight for what he believed were more sensible and sustainable forestry practices. His advocacy only increased after his retirement from the service in 1955, when he became a central voice against the practices of clearcutting and terracing. Brandborg's belief in a limited harvest program came from his lifelong commitment to the crucial importance of forests beyond just their timber value—the watersheds, wildlife habitats, and recreational opportunities. Early on, Brandborg became a leading voice for sustainable management, and he ultimately helped influence the passage of the National Forest Management Act of 1976. Swanson's book follows Brandborg's important advocacy work and accomplishments, but also serves as an excellent study of the evolution of 20th-century national forest policy and the history of conservation in the western United States.

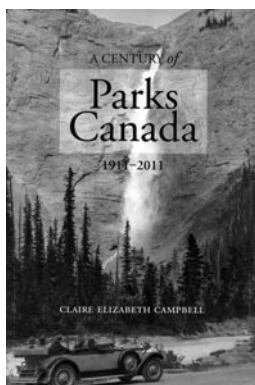
The year 2011 marked the centennial of Canada's national park system. A tremendous source of national pride, the vast system of parks owes a significant debt to



James Bernard Harkin, who was appointed to lead Dominion Parks Branch as its first commissioner in 1911. In *J.B. Harkin: Father of Canada's National Parks* (University of Alberta Press, 2010), author E. J. Hart celebrates this important figure of

Canadian history, who, despite his many accomplishments, is not widely known in Canada. This extensive biography—coming in at well over 500 pages—should help rectify that. Harkin spent a quarter-century as commissioner of dominion parks, and the park system expanded under his guidance. Hart looks at the early promotion of tourism to the parks, including road-building projects, as well as the construction of resort hotels and elite golf courses. He then follows the evolution of Harkin's environmental thinking, looking at his embrace of conservation, his work advocating for wildlife sanctuaries, and his efforts to limit natural resource extraction nationwide. During his time as commissioner, Harkin was also forced to navigate the sometimes rough political waters while striving toward his goals. A tireless worker, Harkin demonstrated to the Canadian population the immense benefits of a national park system and the continuing need for protecting the country's uniquely beautiful natural landscapes.

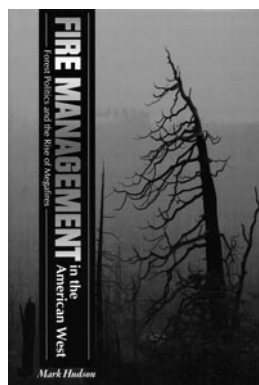
The history of the park system created by Harkin can be found in another book published for the centennial anniversary. *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911–2011* (University of Calgary Press, 2011), edited by Claire Elizabeth Campbell, examines the history of the world's first national park service in a series of original essays. Founded in 1911 as the Dominion Parks Branch, the agency serves as “guardians of the national parks, the national historic sites and the national marine conservation areas of Canada” and manages more than



40 parks and reserves totaling some 200,000 square kilometers. During the past century, Canada's parks have grown to be an integral part of national identity. In her introduction, Campbell comments that “we can learn as much about Canada as about parks from this history.” This is because in many ways the history of the

park system is the history of Canada as a whole. The 14 essays in this collection explore topics such as the promotion of tourism, the effects of automobiles and road construction, the presentation of parks in photography and film, ecological science and archaeology in the parks, and the history of interactions between the agency (now Parks Canada) and local aboriginal communities. Canada's national parks are found throughout the entire nation, which means diverse ecosystems and varying geography. One recurring theme is the debates and conflict between national policy and the sometimes differing interests of local populations. This study of the development of a national park system, along with Hart's biography of Harkin, provides an in-depth history worthy of the centennial moment.

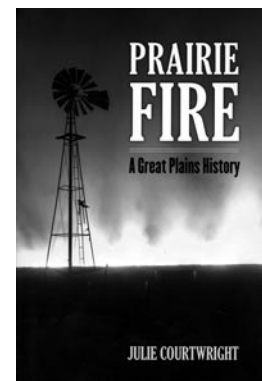
As the number of destructive wildfires in the western United States began to increase in the late 20th century, the long-accepted goal of total fire suppression began to be reexamined. The dominant historical narrative of fire policy places nearly all the blame for the destructive fires at the feet of the U.S. Forest Service, pointing to its century of championing total fire suppression. In *Fire Management in the American West: Forest Politics and the Rise of Megafires* (University Press of Colorado, 2011), Mark Hudson argues that although fire suppression did indeed increase the number of catastrophic wildfires, not all blame should be dumped on the Forest Service. Hudson explores the historic relationship between the Forest Service and



the nation's timber industry, revealing a more complicated narrative. He concludes it was the timber industry groups that helped facilitate the agency's shift toward a focus on fire suppression. During the early and mid-20th century, many of the Forest Service's regulatory initiatives were severely limited by timber industry inter-

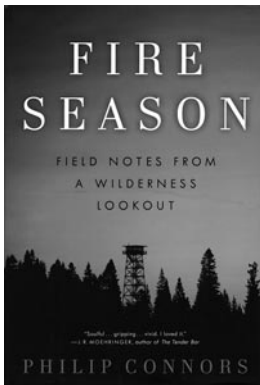
ests. Hudson argues that as the agency failed to gain any regulatory traction, it continued to fall back on the accepted and noncontroversial policy of fire suppression. As the century wore on, national forest planning and budgets came to be dominated by fire policy. However you perceive the book's arguments, Hudson's work is well researched and well written and provides an excellent historical overview of American fire policy from inception to date. The work explores not just the origins of fire exclusion but also the social aspects of wildfires and prospects for modernizing fire management in the future.

Fire history in a more regional context can be found in *Prairie Fire: A Great Plains History* (University Press of Kansas, 2011), by Julie Courtwright. Her history of



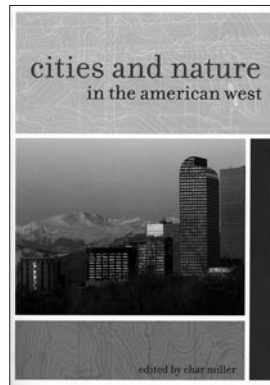
human and fire interactions on the Great Plains demonstrates the importance of both the threats and the benefits of fire to the development of the region. Courtwright traces the history of fire across the broad landscape from Texas to the Dakotas over time, beginning with Native Americans' use of intentional burns to renew and improve the grassland ecosystem. She then examines the fire suppression policies of 19th-century American settlers, who brought with them new perceptions of fire—viewing it as a threat to their livelihood. Not surprisingly, total fire suppression became the dominant approach for most of the next century. The book comes full circle with a discussion of late-20th-century efforts to reintroduce fire for its ecological benefits. Drawing on primary sources ranging from diaries to newspapers, Courtwright also shows how fire helped shape the culture of the region and its history as a whole.

A uniquely personal look at fire policy can be found in Philip Connors's *Fire Season: Field Notes from a Wilderness Lookout*



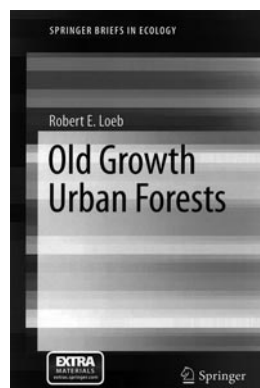
(Ecco, 2011). A onetime editor at the *Wall Street Journal*, Connors left his job in New York City a decade ago to spend a summer working as a fire lookout in New Mexico. After one season he was hooked, and he has returned for duty every year since. This book chronicles one of those seasons, April to August, spent in a lookout tower on the Gila National Forest. In recounting his day-to-day life on the job, Connors describes spotting smoke, pinpointing the location of fires, and working the radio. He also writes movingly about the wonders of the surrounding natural environment and the unexpected joys of solitude. Connors further colors the narrative by delving often into discussions of natural and human history, covering topics such as Aldo Leopold, John Muir, Jack Kerouac, the evolution of fire suppression, and the long history of the Gila landscape. Some of the more entertaining passages of the book detail Connor's off-hours experiences: his interactions with thru-hikers and other people passing by, his creation of a Frisbee golf course to stay occupied, and his explorations of the surrounding forest. Despite the long moments of solitude and inactivity in Connor's work, his book remains engaging throughout. The perfect balance of history and personal narrative form a compelling read from start to finish.

The intersection of the expanding urban environment and the natural western landscape is the focus of a new collection of essays edited by Char Miller, *Cities and Nature in the American West* (University of Nevada Press, 2010). All proceeds from the sale of the book are being donated to the Hal Rothman Research Fellowship at the American Society for Environmental History. The essays, by many of Rothman's friends and colleagues, are broken up into four sections: land, water, campground, and city. Each essay touches on some aspect of the interaction between the built environ-



ment and the landscape and natural resources of the American West. Topics include land conservation and the wine industry in California's Napa Valley; Lady Bird Johnson's efforts to protect local landscapes and preserve regional wildflower species; the challenges of waste management and disposal in Yosemite National Park; the privatization of municipal water in San Jose, California; historical conflicts over oil drilling in Los Angeles; and the complex environmentalism of high-country tourism at Colorado's ski resorts. All the essays provide an engaging look at the development of the modern western landscape, as well as the ongoing complex interactions between human society and the natural environment of the American West.

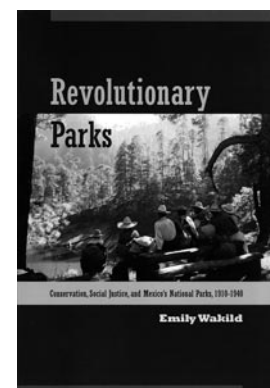
When discussing city environments, one rarely thinks of old-growth forests. Robert E. Loeb looks to change that with his new book, *Old Growth Urban Forests* (Springer, 2011). Loeb understands that many people automatically reject the classification of any urban forest as old-growth and wrote the book "to motivate urban foresters and ecologists to break through a barrier cre-



ated by the hallowed concept of old growth forest as 'undisturbed by humans.'" Loeb begins by defining his subject: urban forests are in metropolitan areas, not always within city lines, and can be classi-

fied as old-growth "based on how the development of the particular forest is related to the most recent forest resetting event during the history of the metropolis," such as war or disease. He then breaks the concept down into various types and forms. After discussing the historical evolution of urban forests, he presents the New York City and Philadelphia forests as case studies. Loeb also provides information on the adaptive management and restoration of old-growth urban forests and the quest for historical continuity in the urban environment. The book includes helpful maps, illustrations, graphs, and tables. Because urban forests have been so thoroughly affected by human disturbance and direct interaction, Loeb's work will be of interest to ecologists, foresters, and urban environmental historians.

The year 1910 saw the beginning of a revolutionary movement in Mexico intent on overthrowing the oppressive regime of Porfirio Díaz. The following decades would bring major upheaval and violence but also significant social reforms throughout the country. One often-overlooked outgrowth of the Mexican Revolution was the development of national parks and a national conservation movement. By 1940, Mexico had more national parks than any other country in the world. In *Revolutionary Parks: Conservation, Social Justice, and Mexico's National Parks, 1910–1940* (University of Arizona Press, 2011), Emily Wakild shows how Mexico's new national parks—as well as the nation's commitment to conservation and environmental justice—were a direct outgrowth of the period's revolutionary ideals. Wakild reveals why the rev-

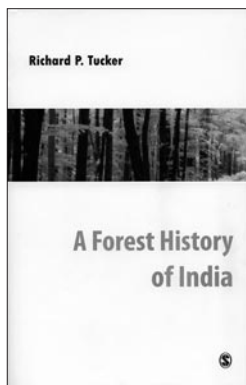


olutionary government considered nature conservation a priority. A new commitment to the nation's rural populations, along with a commitment to the protection of natural resources, brought the creation



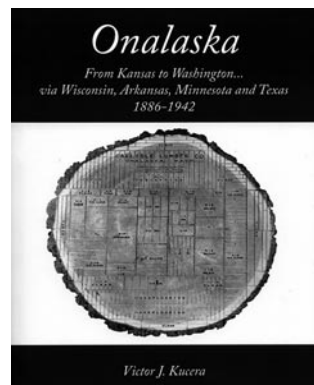
of parks to the forefront. Focusing on four national parks—Lagunas de Zempoala, Popocatepetl-Iztaccihuatl, La Malinche, and El Tepozteco National Parks—Wakild looks at how these parks existed as functional spaces while also serving important ecological, economic, and cultural purposes. The postrevolutionary presidency of Lazaro Cardenas is also given special attention, including his administration's work promoting interconnected social and environmental policies during the 1930s. The complicated dynamics of social and environmental policies of the revolutionary period's land reform movement are also examined in detail. Overall, the book provides a welcome addition to Mexico's growing environmental, social, and political history scholarship.

Another important work of international environmental history explores the forests of India. In *A Forest History of India* (Sage,



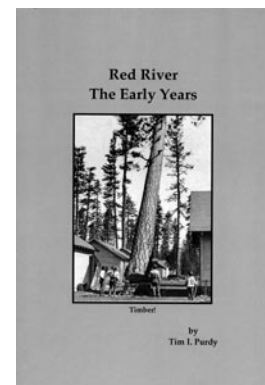
2012), Richard P. Tucker brings together a collection of his articles on India published over the past 30 years. The material covers the history of India's forests from the 19th-century colonial era through independence and on into the later parts of the 20th century. Articles examine British colonial administration in detail, looking at forest management and natural resource extraction under the Crown. Tucker also looks at postcolonial forestry in India, social forestry, grazing, game management, the rise of the conservation movement, timber economics, and nontimber forest products—all against a backdrop of conflict between the colonial government and local populations, between various commercial interests, between conservationists and industrialists, and more. Taken as a whole, the collection presents a quality introductory overview of Indian forest history.

Four towns in the United States have been named Onalaska, and the histories of all



four are tied together by the timber industry. In *Onalaska: From Kansas to Washington... via Wisconsin, Arkansas, Minnesota and Texas, 1886-1942* (Pacific Star Press, 2011), author Victor J. Kucera follows a narrative through the four towns as he traces the rise and fall of a large American lumber company. The book provides a close look at turn-of-the-century lumber company operations in several regions. The story begins in Kansas, where William Carlisle and Company was founded in 1886 as a wholesale lumber partnership among William Carlisle, George Pennell, and Benjamin P. Blanchard. As the company began to grow and expand, operations spread into other states. In 1896, it purchased a sawmill in Onalaska, Wisconsin, completely dismantled it, and reassembled the parts in Arkansas. In a nod to the source of the machinery, the new town built around the relocated sawmill was named Onalaska. Within the next decade the Carlisle Company established another large sawmill town with the same name in Texas. Shortly thereafter, the company expanded operations into the Pacific Northwest, where the town of Onalaska, Washington, naturally followed. Kucera documents the growth of the Carlisle Company's lumber interests as operations spread throughout the country. Also examined is the day-to-day life of a mill employee in a sawmill town with its churches, schools, and entertainment. The story concludes as the company falters economically in the 1930s before eventually going bankrupt. The book is supplemented with nearly 150 historical photos and maps.

Another look at early American lumber company operation can be found in *Red River: The Early Years*, by Tim I. Purdy (Lahontan Images, 2011). Founded by Thomas Barlow Walker in Minnesota during the late 19th century, the Red River Lumber Company quickly grew into a



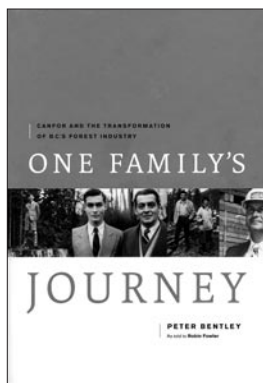
large and profitable enterprise. In need of additional timber supplies, Walker moved his company's operations west to California following the turn of the century. In his concise overview of the company's operations during the time period, Purdy follows the relocation of Red River Lumber Company to northern California, where a large company town was eventually founded and built at Westwood. The book provides a look at the early-20th-century lumber industry in the American West, as well as life in a company town. Purdy also devotes a chapter to Red River's use of folklore in company advertising. Paul Bunyan iconography, produced by artist William Laughead, contributed in no small part to the company's growth and success on the national market. Readers interested in additional historical materials on the Red River Lumber Company can consult the Alvin J. Huss Archives at the Forest History Society. FHS houses the William B. Laughead Papers, a Red River Lumber Company photograph album, and a company file of vintage advertising materials.

A look at sawmill work on a smaller, more personal scale can be found in *They Sawed Up a Storm: The Women's Sawmill at Turkey Pond, New Hampshire, 1942* (Jetty House, 2010), by Sarah Shea Smith. The Great New England Hurricane of 1938



felled massive quantities of timber, and four years later, as the United States entered World War II, the U.S. Forest Service built the Turkey Pond sawmill in Concord to process it into much-needed lumber. The mill would be operated by women. Smith documents this overlooked chapter of northeastern forest history in her brief but well-illustrated book. She begins with a history of the hurricane and its immediate aftermath—the forest destruction and billions of board feet of downed timber. She then looks at the Forest Service’s timber salvage operations in the region, which eventually led to the construction of a sawmill at Turkey Pond. The focus of the book is the women who made the project work, and Smith profiles some of the employees while also discussing the working conditions in the mill. This well-illustrated book provides an interesting glimpse of an important—yet somewhat forgotten—snapshot from American history.

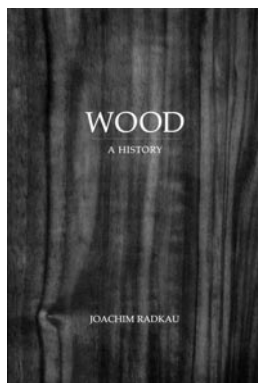
A top-down look at forest industry operations can be found in Peter J. G. Bentley’s *One Family’s Journey: Canfor and the Transformation of B.C.’s Forest Industry* (Douglas and McIntyre, 2012). A combination of autobiography and corporate history, the book recounts Bentley’s own life while also documenting the forest products industry in Canada over the second



half of the 20th century. Bentley arrived in Canada with his Austrian immigrant family, fleeing Adolph Hitler, on the eve of World War II. He grew up working in logging camps and sawmills, alongside the growing family business in lumber and plywood production. As he rose within the company, Bentley helped build Canfor and its subsidiary, Canadian Forest Products Ltd., into a leading global forest products company. The book details pivotal moments for the company, such as the huge investments made in Prince George’s

pulp mills during the early 1960s. Bentley recounts the challenges of finding investors and building these state-of-the-art mills. The reader is also taken into the company boardroom to consider corporate politics, growth, strategy, and responsibility. In addition to the world of forest products, Bentley touches on his involvement in distributing German cars in Canada and his passionate work bringing a National Hockey League franchise to Vancouver. In the book’s final chapter, Bentley looks ahead and maps out a possible future for the Canadian forest industry. Overall an entertaining and informative biography, the book provides an inside look at the corporate history of Canada’s forest products industry over the past 60 years.

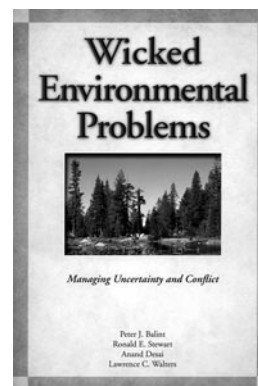
The simple title belies the breadth and scope of *Wood: A History* (Polity, 2012), by Joachim Radkau. First published in German as *Holz* in 2007, the new English-language translation opens Radkau’s work up to new audiences. The book connects wood directly to historical events and cultural changes over the past thousand years. With a focus on Europe, Radkau looks at the role of wood in the evolution of human civilizations over time. A large portion of the book looks at the Middle Ages through the industrial revolution, discussing topics such as wood construction, shipbuilding, fire-



wood consumption, and wood as an industrial energy source. The book also provides excellent analysis of the economics of industry and trade, as well as the perceived wood shortages in various historic periods. Another focus is wood’s role in technological advancement from the industrial revolution to the present. Obviously a huge subject to tackle, the book packs a lot of information into its 400 pages. A section called “Wood Talk” features quotes about wood from various historical figures. Occasionally the translation gets in the way

for the reader, but overall the work is sound. In some respects the book is similar to John Perlin’s *A Forest Journey: The Role of Wood in the Development of Civilization*, in that it details the role of wood in the development of European civilizations.

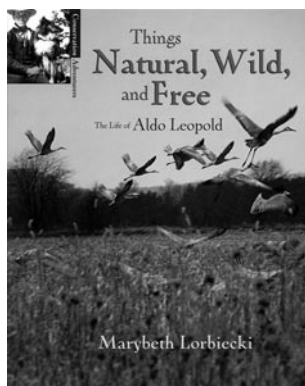
Anyone involved in land or natural resources management will want to look at *Wicked Environmental Problems: Managing Uncertainty and Conflict* (Island Press, 2011), by Peter J. Balint, Ronald E.



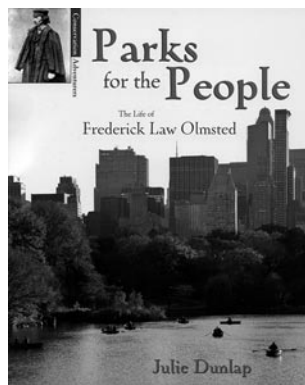
Stewart, Anand Desai, and Lawrence C. Walters. The authors note that “the clashing interests of environmentalists, developers, and others have elevated many environmental problems that require decisions at the federal and state level from simple, to complex, to ‘wicked.’” These wicked environmental problems can become contentious political conflicts. Scientific uncertainty surrounding large-scale policy decisions, combined with a lack of agreement on values, can create a seemingly unwinnable stalemate. This book presents examples of such wicked problems and offers strategies for environmental management decision making. The four case studies presented are restoring the Everglades in Florida, managing the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania, implementing a cap-and-trade program for carbon dioxide emissions in Europe, and managing the national forests of the Sierra Nevada region in California. The longest case study examines in detail the conflicts surrounding the U.S. Forest Service’s Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment. The authors lay out past approaches to similarly complex management dilemmas and then discuss possible solutions. Proposed strategies include ways to incorporate public participation and the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act while developing enhanced learning networks and following

the precautionary principle. Since there is no one correct solution to a wicked problem, management solutions must be found that are ecologically sound and acceptable in some way to all parties involved. It is a challenge, but this book offers sound advice for environmental management agencies at all levels.

Younger readers may be interested in two new recent biographies from the Fulcrum Books “Conservation Adventures” series.

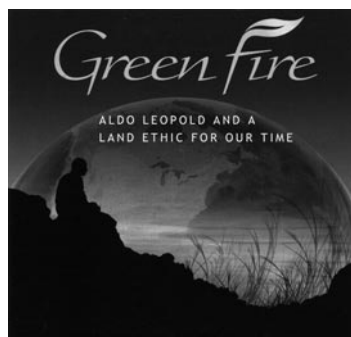


In *Things Natural, Wild, and Free: The Life of Aldo Leopold* (2011), Leopold scholar Marybeth Lorbiecki provides a portrait of the famed ecologist and conservationist. Lorbiecki is also the author of a full-length scholarly work on Leopold, but this version is designed for readers ages nine to 12. The book follows Leopold from his childhood spent exploring the natural world surrounding his home in Iowa, to his U.S. Forest Service career in the Southwest, and then his ecological restoration work in Wisconsin and the writing of *A Sand County Almanac*. Lorbiecki clearly communicates Leopold’s love for the outdoors, and she documents how his work with the Forest Service contributed to his focus on wilderness and his research in wildlife management and ecology—and ultimately to his approach to land management, “the land ethic.” The book includes numerous



historical photos and provides a nice overview of Leopold’s life and work written in an entertaining style for younger readers. Another recent work from the same series is *Parks for the People: The Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (2011), by Julie Dunlap. Following the life of Olmsted from childhood to world-renowned landscape architect, Dunlap makes plain his influence on American parks and urban design. The biography follows Olmsted’s designing of Central Park in New York City, his work on the U.S. Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, his move west to the gold mines of California, and his work to protect the Yosemite Valley. The book presents the stages of Olmsted’s life almost as a series of adventures, which will surely engage young readers. Like the Leopold biography, the Olmsted book is well illustrated.

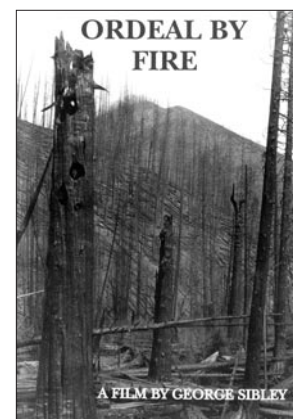
Aldo Leopold is also the subject of a new documentary film, *Green Fire*. It is written, directed, and produced by the same team that did the film *The Greatest Good*, an award-winning history of the U.S. Forest Service. *Green Fire* explores Leopold’s personal journey of observation and understanding by taking an untraditional approach to telling his life story. Leopold



biographer Curt Meine serves as the film’s on-screen guide and narrator; actor Peter Coyote gives voice to Leopold’s writings. The film weaves together a biography of the ecologist and visits with people who are putting Leopold’s land ethic into practice, from ranchers in the Southwest to environmental educators in Chicago. The phrase “green fire” comes from Leopold’s essay “Thinking Like a Mountain,” in *A Sand County Almanac*, about a moment when, as a young forester in New Mexico, he shot a wolf and scrambled down from the rim rock in time to see the green fire go out of her eyes. A narrative thread in the film is the search for the site of the shooting. But the film is also an exploration

of the different meanings of “green fire,” such as how the land ethic has spread like a green fire across the land. At just under 60 minutes, the film is ideal for classroom use as well as community screenings. Visit [www.greenfiremovie.com](http://www.greenfiremovie.com) to purchase the film or find a screening near you. (JGL)

The Big Blowup of 1910—the fires that scorched 3 million acres in the Northern Rockies and led to drastic changes in federal fire policy, the consequences of which we are still living with a century later—has been the subject of two outstanding books in the past decade. But only recently has this significant event in fire history been told on film. In *Ordeal by Fire*, filmmaker George Sibley covers a great deal of ground in just 60 minutes, beginning with a history of fire in the western landscape and ending with a discussion of fire in Florida today. In between, with the help of historians,



meteorologists, fire researchers, and foresters, he covers the birth of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905, the weather and land conditions in the Northern Rockies the fateful August of 1910, and then the many stories of the fire itself. Viewers learn about the role of railroads in both starting the Big Blowup and helping to evacuate people from its path. The film also considers the fire’s consequences for the agency and its fire policies, as well as firefighting training. Sibley interviewed Mann Gulch survivor Bob Sallee, who speaks openly about his experience in firefighting and at Mann Gulch in 1949. Most fascinating are his interviews with one survivor of the 1910 fire and with several descendants of survivors, all of whom make the fire a very personal affair with their tales. The history is solid, and the story of the fire that changed history is well told. The film is available through online retailers like Amazon. (JGL) □